

RC F GT3 Ready to Race in Detroit

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DETROIT, Mich. (May 31, 2019) – Lexus and AIM VASSER SULLIVAN are set to compete at Detroit's Raceway at Belle Isle Park in a 100-minute sprint race on Saturday, coming off the team's first victory earlier this month at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course.

Jack Hawksworth and Richard Heistand drove the AVS No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3 to victory at Mid-Ohio, marking the first IMSA victory for the newly formed team in just its third race and the third win for Lexus since entering IMSA competition in 2017. The win was the first for Heistand in IMSA competition and the second IMSA victory for Hawksworth, who also won his first IMSA start at the Indianapolis Grand Prix circuit in 2014.

Lexus currently leads the new GTD Sprint Cup point standings following the first sprint race of the season at Mid-Ohio. Hawksworth and Heistand and the AVS No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3 are also atop the GTD Sprint Cup point standings following their win at Mid-Ohio, while Townsend Bell and Frankie Montecalvo currently sit fifth in the Sprint Cup standings following a fifth-place finish at Mid-Ohio.

This weekend's race in Detroit is optional for the GTD class and points earned in Saturday's race will not count toward the overall championship standings and only toward the Sprint Cup championship. Overall, Bell and Montecalvo and the No. 12 Lexus are currently second in the GTD overall championship points with three top-10 finishes to start the season, including a second-place podium result at the season-opening Rolex 24 at Daytona. The No. 14 RC F GT3 moved up to third in the overall championship standings with the win at Mid-Ohio and Lexus sits second in the overall GTD manufacturer points.

Bell, Hawksworth and Montecalvo all have experience racing around the 14-turn, 2.5-mile Belle Isle street circuit, and Heistand will make his first start there. Hawksworth finished seventh in the GTD class in the 2017 event, running the second-quickest lap of the race behind the wheel of the RC F GT3. He has also raced on Belle Isle in IndyCar competition six times from 2014-2016, finishing seventh in both 2015 races. Bell has raced the Detroit street circuit three times, twice in IMSA in 2014 and 2015 with finishes of eighth and ninth, respectively and also once in Indy Lights competition in 2000 where he finished seventh.

Saturday's IMSA race begins at 12:40 p.m. EDT with coverage of the 100-minute sprint race on NBCSN beginning at 12:30 EDT. Fans can also keep up with Lexus Racing on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) by using #LexusRCF GT3, #LexusPerformance and #LexusRacing, and online at www.Lexus.com/Motorsports.

AIM VASSER SULLIVAN Driver Quotes

JACK HAWKSWORTH, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

Do you feel your team has momentum going into the Detroit race weekend after the win at Mid-Ohio?

"It was a huge confidence boost to get that first win out of the way so early for the AIM VASSER SULLIVAN team. We've now had three races and two podiums in three of them, which is pretty impressive with how new everything is for this team. We are second and third in the overall championship with both cars and second for Lexus in the manufacturer standings, so things are really starting to come together. I know we still have things to work on, so we'll just continue to try to make things better from all aspects. Detroit, Watkins Glen and Mosport in the past have been quite good circuits for our Lexus RC F GT3 in terms of performance. So, really if we can continue to execute really strong, clean weekends with no errors and no mistakes on the track or in the pit lane I don't see no reason why we can't have a really good run of results for both AIM VASSER SULLIVAN cars. Momentum is definitely on our side at the minute and hopefully we can just keep on building."

Do you enjoy racing the street circuit at Belle Isle?

"I love racing at Detroit. It's a really technical circuit. It's got probably more corners than any other track that we go to this year. It's very bumpy and there's no room for error. It's a real kind of driver's circuit, I would call it. And, obviously, we don't do a lot of street circuits so it's something which I always look forward to. The RC F GT3 has always been good around Belle Isle. We'll be hoping this is the year to turn it into a good result. I love driving around Detroit. It's a great circuit."

RICHARD HEISTAND, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

Are you looking forward to racing at Belle Isle for the first time?

“I’m really excited to race on Belle Isle in Detroit. Probably of all of the races, I’m a fan of street courses. It just kicks the adrenaline up and makes the excitement that much higher. You get a limited amount of time to get up to speed on the track and you can’t make any mistakes. I’ve always liked street circuits. This will be my first time racing there, but that’s kind of what it feels like for everywhere we go this year for me and I’m getting used to that. We’re feeling confident about the race coming off our win at Mid-Ohio.”

TOWNSEND BELL, No. 12 Lexus RC F GT3

What is your outlook for racing at Belle Isle this weekend?

“I haven’t been to Belle Isle in quite some time so we’re going to work hard and prepare to make sure I’m current. I’ve certainly followed the racing there the last few years. The last time I raced there was in 2015. I think based on what I’ve heard about the Lexus RC F GT3 there is that it’s pretty competitive. Not a track that I would point to normally on the schedule and say that’s where we’re going to be strong, but Jack (Hawksworth) has been spot on with his predictions this year in terms of where he thinks we’ll be alright. So, we’ll just have to see when we get there. We just need to keep doing what we’re doing, finishing races and extracting the most amount of points that we can from each situation. We’ve done that in the first three races and nothing spectacular for the #12 car so far, but we’re learning quickly, and I think we’re heading in the right direction. I’m looking forward to getting back to Detroit to race. It will be a busy weekend for me. I’ve got an IndyCar doubleheader to do with NBC Sports and I’ve got an IMSA race to compete in with AIM VASSER SULLIVAN, but I wouldn’t want to be doing anything else.”

FRANKIE MONTECALVO, No. 12 Lexus RC F GT3

Are you pleased with the strong start to the 2019 season with AIM VASSER SULLIVAN?

“The AIM VASSER SULLIVAN team has had a very strong start to the season. The crew has done a phenomenal job preparing both the #12 and #14 Lexus RC F GT3s. Each car has had a podium finish in the first three races, and I think the more time we have together the better we will get. I had the opportunity to race in Detroit once before in 2015. It is the only street race on the schedule and it’s a tough circuit. The track is very bumpy, which makes the car set-up very important. Track time is very limited for street races so we will have to utilize our track time as efficiently as possible. I look forward to the Detroit race weekend and cannot wait to get back on track.”